

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: FHWA PRESS RELEASE - SHAKWAK PROJECT

REF: OTTAWA 3536

1. THERE FOLLOWS FEDERAL HIGHWAY PRESS RELEASE ON SHAKWAK
PROJECT TO BE RELEASED IN WASHINGTON ON THURSDAY, JULY 20:

2. BEGIN TEXT

US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY BROCK ADAMS
ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT PUBLIC WORKS CANADA, IN COOPERATION
WITH THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION IS LETTING CONTRACTS
TO BID ON TWO 15-MILE SECTIONS WHICH ARE A PORTION OF A
LONG-RANGE PROGRAM TO RECONSTRUCT 322 MILES OF HIGHWAYS IN
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THE CANADIAN YUKON AND A CORNER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

NONE OF THE PROJECT IS ON US SOIL, BUT IT FORGES AN
IMPORTANT LINK BETWEEN HAINES, ALASKA, WHICH IS THE NORTH
TERMINUS OF THE ALASKA FERRY SYSTEM, WITH THE ALASKA/YUKON
TERRITORY BOUNDARY, JOINING THE ALASKA HIGHWAY AT HAINES
JUNCTION IN THE YUKON.

AN AGREEMENT WAS REACHED WITH CANADA IN NOVEMBER 1976 UNDER

PROVISIONS OF THE US FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY ACT OF 1973, WHICH AUTHORIZED \$58,670,000 FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION; IT IS KNOWN AS THE SHAKWAK PROJECT. THE AGREEMENT CALLS FOR CANADA TO PROVIDE THE RIGHT-OF-WAY AND MAINTAIN THE CANADIAN PORTIONS WHILE THE US WILL PROVIDE THE RECONSTRUCTION FUNDS.

THE EVENTUAL RECONSTRUCTION OF 322 MILES WILL INCLUDE 117 MILES OF THE HAINES CUTOFF ROAD, WHICH RUNS SOUTHEAST FROM HAINES JUNCTION IN CANADA'S YUKON TERRITORY THROUGH BRITISH COLUMBIA TO THE ALASKAN/BRITISH COLUMBIA BORDER AT THE LOWER ALASKAN PENINSULA, AND 205 MILES OF THE ALASKA HIGHWAY RUNNING NORTHWEST FROM HAINES JUNCTION TO THE ALASKA/YUKON BORDER.

THE TWO IMMEDIATE PROJECTS WERE ADVERTISED BEGINNING IN MID-JULY AND CONTRACTS WILL BE AWARDED ON OR ABOUT AUGUST 17. THEY INVOLVE ABOUT 15 MILES NORTH OF HAINES JUNCTION IN CANADA, AND ANOTHER 15 MILES SOUTH OF HAINES JUNCTION, WHICH IS ABOUT THE CENTER OF THE OVERALL PROJECT. HAINES JUNCTION, CANADA, IS NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH HAINES AT THE SOUTHERN TERMINUS OF THE HIGHWAY ON THE ALASKAN PENINSULA.

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BIDS WILL BE RECEIVED AT VANCOUVER AND, UNDER THE AGREEMENT, BOTH US AND CANADIAN CONTRACTORS MAY BID.

CONSTRUCTION WILL BE INITIATED ON AUGUST 15, WHEN FHWA ACTING ADMINISTRATOR KARL S. BOWERS AND CANADA'S DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF PUBLIC WORKS JOHN A. H. MACKAY, ALONG WITH OTHER US AND CANADIAN DIGNITARIES, PARTICIPATE IN A GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY.

END TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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